

Cardwell, Olsen Honored For 'Hall Of Fame' Efforts

By J. Thomas McNamara

Eight years ago Thom Moss, Rusty Martin, John Cardwell and Chris Olsen sat down for lunch at the Wagon to determine what they could do to re-instill pride in Decatur athletics, the kind of pride they had in the 50s and 60s when they were going through the schools here.

Last Tuesday night Cardwell and Olsen received recognition for their hard work in getting the Decatur Athletic Council off the ground, including the center piece of their efforts, the Hall of Fame.

The sixth class was inducted into the Hall last week, but the council also remembered two gentlemen who love this community for what it is, what it can be and what it has been.

But what meant more to Cardwell and Olsen than their own personal recognition was seeing Moss and Martin's daughters, Melissa and Lindsay, receive the council's Scholar-Athlete and Athlete of the Year honors. Their fathers, Thom and Rusty, were with Cardwell and Olsen when the council was formed.

"Eight years ago we sat down in the Wagon at lunch, the four of us, and said, you know we really need to do something and get out these people and get them charged up like we were," recalled Cardwell before last week's program where he was among those honored.

"The old thing in the 50s and 60s we were proud of being from Decatur, proud of athletics, maybe that's what it takes," said Cardwell. "So that concept took off. It was hard work. Our late Mayor Gary Anderson was the first person we contacted.

"We got a meeting with him and said you used to be the ex-president of the Decatur school board and you're the mayor now what do you think it's going to take. It's going to take hard work and you're going to have to make some changes and you're going to have to sup-



port the people that will make those same views and changes," said Cardwell of the conversation with the late Mayor and former school board president.

"You're going to have to get new people on the school board, you're going to have to get new people on the city council. If you want it to happen, you're going to have to support that," he said. "And we've done that.

Reward Is Outstanding

"The reward is outstanding, I'm very appreciative," said he of the recognition that would come later that night. "But the thing is look at the pride Decatur has had over the last three, four to five years. That's really what we wanted to do and we've achieved it.

"When I stepped aside with Chris last year we felt we had got it done. We sat back and said we have our careers, other jobs, families to raise, my children 12 and 10 years old, and his are a little older, we need to spend more time with them," said Cardwell of being with his family more now.

Cardwell also said the council may be on the verge of finding a permanent home for the Hall of Fame since he recently purchased the old Jeanne Lindquist studio on West Prairie which he says would be ideal

for the sports memorabilia this community has collected through the years, including the Hall of Fame which now has six classes enshrined, including the latest last Tuesday night—Mark Malley, the late Wayne Webb, Don Shroyer, Margie Wright and the 1981 ADM men's fastpitch softball championship team.

"My heart is in it and I think if all goes right we can," said Cardwell. "I think it would be the perfect facility for it."

He also would move the Fellowship of Christian Athletes into it as well.

"I look at the kids today and the schools and I think it's been a big turnaround," said Cardwell of the eight years well spent. "There's still room for improvement as with everything. There's a lot of good kids out there and that's what this is all about."

Greatest Satisfaction

Olsen's says his greatest satisfaction is seeing how sports in general have really improved in Decatur. "And I look back on the success of the Stephen Decatur basketball team, some of the football teams that have made the playoffs, the track success, the girls softball success, the girls volleyball success, I just like to think the Decatur Athletic Council had a small part in turning the corner on a lot of different athletic programs," said the former council president.

"That's really a special thrill to see Lindsay Martin, Melissa Moss and Parker Shade are all kids we've known for a long time, grow up and get honored here, very deservedly so," said Olsen.

About Tuesday night's turnout which was the smallest ever, Olsen had these thoughts, "As we get farther into this, there's so many things for kids to do, especially in the summer time, that it's tough to attract crowds, but, I think, the people who are here are excited and I think it will be a great program."